

King County Auditor's Office

Kymber Waltnunson, King County Auditor



King County

DATE: January 23, 2015

TO: Metropolitan King County Councilmembers

FROM: Kymber Waltnunson, King County Auditor

SUBJECT: Follow-up on Review of County Executive's Report Regarding Acquisition and Governance of the Puget Sound Emergency Radio Network

The Puget Sound Emergency Radio Network team has made progress in addressing our recommendations resulting in a number of positive actions that enhance this important effort to replace the county's aging emergency radio network. For example, it brought on a communications manager to develop and finalize a communications plan. This plan was accepted by the partners in the existing radio system and is being implemented. However, additional actions are needed, especially in areas such as risk planning and mitigation, to fully implement several of the recommendations, as detailed below.

Of the six audit recommendations:

DONE	1	Recommendation has been fully implemented Auditor will no longer monitor
PROGRESS	3	Recommendations are in progress or partially implemented Auditor will continue to monitor
OPEN	0	Recommendations remain unresolved Auditor will continue to monitor
CLOSED	2	Recommendations no longer applicable Auditor will no longer monitor

Implementation Status as of January 2015

#	Quick Status	Recommendation	Status Detail
1	CLOSED	The Puget Sound Emergency Radio Network team should consider the full range of financing options, such as users paying for radios, prior to transmitting its financing proposal to the County Executive.	There is no indication that additional options, such as users paying for radios, were considered in the transmittal to the County Council. The opportunity to implement this recommendation has passed so it will be closed. The County Executive's response to our management letter said that in their opinion the project team had considered the full range of funding options.
2	CLOSED	The Puget Sound Emergency Radio Network team should report costs using conventional methods including reporting known future costs, such as mid-cycle radio replacement, in future analyses.	The County Executive's proposed ordinance providing project costs were reported using conventional methods in the ordinance transmitted to the County Council. However, future costs such as mid-cycle radio replacement were not included. In his response to our management letter, the County Executive indicated that the project team does not plan to include these costs, as they will be incurred sufficiently in the future to allow jurisdictions to develop plans for how they will replace their radios. While we agree that replacements will not be needed for another decade, providing jurisdictions a full picture of the total cost of the system including known future costs such as radio replacements, provides decision-makers with more relevant and useful information. The opportunity to implement this recommendation has passed so it will be closed.
3	PROGRESS	The Puget Sound Emergency Radio Network project team should ensure agreement by the Steering Committee upon a set of criteria to evaluate governance options. The project team should consistently evaluate the potential options according to those criteria and communicate the results to its partners and other decision-makers.	The Steering Committee has agreed that a nonprofit is the best governance structure for the future radio network. It will be important to set up an evaluation framework that the future nonprofit can use to determine whether the benefits it expects to achieve from this structure are realized. The project team has committed to conducting this type of evaluation once the system is up and running.

#	Quick Status	Recommendation	Status Detail
4	PROGRESS	The Puget Sound Emergency Radio Network project team should reassess the radio project's risk rating to reflect the project's entire scope, including its capital component. Oversight by the Project Review Board should be implemented as appropriate to the scoring, which may include increased monitoring, phased appropriation, and external quality assurance.	The project team has made progress implementing this recommendation by creating a plan for external quality assurance, which they plan to implement in the coming weeks. Continuing to incorporate existing oversight and accountability mechanisms used by both capital and IT projects within the County will allow the project to proactively identify and mitigate risks.
5	PROGRESS	The Puget Sound Emergency Radio Network project team should revise its risk management plan to better visualize potential risks and mitigation strategies, including organization of risks by likelihood of impact, decision-making process, and appropriate stakeholders. For example, incorporating elements from the Capital Project Management Work Group risk templates.	The project team has revised and expanded the project's risk management plan despite the County Executive's initial nonconcurrence with this recommendation. Additionally, the project team has committed to continuing to evaluate and update this plan as the project moves forward. Continued work in this area, including applying approaches currently used for large capital projects within the County, will improve project outcomes.
6	DONE	The Puget Sound Emergency Radio Network project team should immediately expand its communications plan to incorporate internal and external communication strategies and community outreach plans, including communication decision matrices.	The project team hired and brought on board a communications manager to develop and finalize a communications plan, which was approved by the partners in the current system and is in the process of being implemented.

Ben Thompson, Deputy County Auditor, conducted this review. Kymber Waltmunson, County Auditor, was the project supervisor. Please contact Ben Thompson at 477-1035 if you have any questions about the issues discussed in this letter.

cc: Dow Constantine, King County Executive
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